THE
NEW AGE
INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER"
A WEEKLY REVIEW OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND ART

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CONTENTS.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Dr. Walter Leaf writes an article of six columns in the *Westminster Bank Review* for November in defence of his assertion that banks do not create credit. The article has been evoked by "various criticisms," which he has seen in the Press, and which show such "confusion of thought" that he thinks the subject merits "fuller discussion." To what particular criticisms he alludes it is not easy to discover, but there is evidence in his occasional reference to the term "consumers' credits" that he is replying to finance-reform critics in the Labour Party in addition to critics in the general Press. Dr. Leaf rightly says that this question is of "vital importance in the politics of to-day," for it is "the foundation of various theories put forward by the *supporters of inflation* more or less disguised." (Our italics.) The terms of this last passage need emphasizing. All critics who are pressing for an expansion of credit without a coincident, radical change in the whole system of pricing retail articles to consumers are disguised inflationists. With the exception of the Social Credit Movement there is no body of credit-reform propagandists who recognise the equal necessity of pricing-reform. In indicting inflationism as he does, Dr. Leaf is digressing from the immediate issue, but the digression is important because it hints at the nature of his second line of defence if he should be forced to retire from his first. That his present forward position is untenable will be made manifest by other pens than ours—they are busy on the assault already—but when the issue is then changed from "*Can* banks create credit?" to "*Should* banks create credit?" Dr. Leaf will be able to put up a counter-attack to which there can be no resistance unless the defence has consolidated itself on *all* the facts discovered in Major Douglas's credit analysis. Credit-reform without costing-reform will collapse under the first bombardment from the bankers' heavy artillery.

In mentioning "consumers' credits," Dr. Leaf is without doubt referring to the *Birmingham Proposals*, which contain that term, although not in the sense in which it has been consistently used in Social Credit literature. We pointed out at the time that these so-called consumers' credits were really producers' credits. Now Mr. Oswald Mosley, who sponsors the *Birmingham Proposals*, may enter Parliament shortly; and this contingency explains the appearance of Dr. Leaf in the role of counter propagandist to Mr. Mosley's ideas. There are rumours, too, that the disquietude at Labour Headquarters over his candidature reflects the feeling of certain eminent Labour politicians that his presence in Parliament on a credit-reform ticket would be an embarrassment just now. Mr. Snowden's name has been mentioned—a plausible speculation as concerning one who has called himself the "bankers' Minister." However that may be, the situation as it affects our own position has two aspects. Insofar as Mr. Mosley may open up an analytical criticism of the existing laws of finance in the House he will be useful. But insofar as he agitates for the *Birmingham* alternative he will be a nuisance. Two years or more ago Major Douglas foretold that when the high financiers became convinced that it was no longer politic to maintain the attitude of masterly silence in face of Social Credit criticism, they would take care not to challenge it, but to challenge *something else that looked like it*. The *Birmingham Proposals* afford them just this kind of diversion. One need not suspect for a moment that there has been any complicity between them and Mr. Mosley—an innoble brow is not essential to the blessing of a damned error—in fact the deception of the public is almost always carried out through the volitional instrumentality of perfectly sincere men. But that does not alter the fact that Mr. Mosley, in hallmarking his proposals with the name "consumers' credits," has introduced the same element of confusion into the true controversy as would have resulted

from deliberate collusion between himself and the bankers. It all happens so naturally. Social credit is an all-Party question. Mr. Mosley is a Party politician. In order to get an electoral advantage over competing Parties by taking up the credit question, he is bound to give Social Credit a Party twist —which means that he must leave something out. We do not quarrel with him on that score. His political ambitions are legitimate in themselves; and he would be stupid to try to achieve them by advocating a cause which, when fully explained, could be consistently taken up by his Liberal or Conservative competitors as their own directly it looked like becoming popular. So much as regards himself. But we must take care to avoid being involved in the final outcome of his proposals. As they stand, their soundness as well as their practicability can be refuted. It is our business to take what steps we can to preserve the Social Credit proposals from sharing their condemnation.

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The *Birmingham Proposals* would give the Government control of credit policy, which would include the power to expand and contract credit at will. So far so good. But the vital question is that of the principle on which this expansion and contraction would take place. The principle appears to be that of watching prices in order to increase the flow of credit when they tend to fall, and decrease it when they tend to rise. But this is what the banks do now, except that they do it on a longer wavelength. The only difference between the "Big Five" and the "Birmingham" chauffeurs is that while the former put on the breaks every few miles the latter would put in the reversing gear every few yards. John Bull is already sufficiently exasperated to have to sit back tight in his seat every year or two; what he would say to have his head forced through the wind screen once a month we will not guess. The *Birmingham Proposals* are futile because they ignore the fact that, *at any level*, prices must contain inflationary elements. This inflation may *fluctuate* by reason of variations in the flow of loan-credit, but it *has its rise* in the present system of costing. By "inflation" we mean something vitally different from what is popularly connoted by that word. "Inflation" in its true sense means the presence in prices of costs which ought not to be included. And the reason why they "ought" not to be there is not a moral, but an arithmetical reason, namely that the population does not possess the money to meet them. This happens because the total costs of every separate business concern over a given period are added together and become an aggregate industrial cost; while only a proportion of those separate costs are paid out to consumers, whose aggregated incomes for that period are therefore below aggregated costs. The gap between these sums is so much inflation, no matter whether prices are rising or falling. To try to fill up the gap simply by varying the rate of issue of loan credit is like attempting to use a piece of string as a lever. The *Birmingham Proposals* seek to make Credit *law* a function of Price *anarchy*. They would regulate the issue of credit through the banks on the unregulated recall of credit through the shopkeepers. The price-system is an integral part of the Credit System, and no accrediting reform which is not coincidentally a pricing reform is a reform at all.

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Having now reduced the controversy between Dr. Leaf and his critics to its proper perspective, let us make a comment or two on his argument. Banks cannot create credits, he says, because "the creation of Credit can only be the work of the State." He explains this by pointing out that the volume of credit depends on the volume of currency that the State chooses to put into circulation. He qualifies this to the extent of saying that "Banks of issue are creators of credit"; but that "deposit banks are only distributors of credit, which is created by powers entirely beyond their control." Dr. Leaf's case is seen to turn on his own definition of "credit." By this term he means simply currency—legal tender. But nobody has suggested that the joint-stock banks can create legal tender, nor even that the English bank of issue—the Bank of England—can now do so except to an extent so limited that it does not affect the general argument. He contradicts certain of his critics who "appear to think that it is in the power of 'the banks' to give such additional credits, if they will, without cancelling other credits which they are already giving in other directions." But to refute their argument he must make two assumptions:—

> 1. That the State fixes the amount of legal tender without reference to the financiers who control the national banking system.
>
> 2. That the ratio of bank credit to legal tender is imposed on the banks by the State or by some other influence outside the bankers' control, and is unalterable.

Neither of these is tenable. As regards the first, Dr. Leaf makes a remark that

> "The Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken over the whole control by his unlimited right to issue currency at his discretion,"

but, allowing this to be legally true, what is it worth when one Chancellor of the Exchequer claims to be the "Bankers' Minister" (we apologise for rubbing this in), and when, to go further back to Sir Edward Holden, that gentleman paid a tribute to Mr. Lloyd George for having "done everything we asked him to"—that "everything" including the very act now under discussion; namely, issuing currency notes at the beginning of August, 1914, to save the banks from fulfilling their promise to pay out gold on demand? As regards the second, can Dr. Leaf point to any legislation affecting the ratio of credit to legal tender? On the contrary, it is an empiric ratio established by the bankers themselves. We are far from saying that, under the existing credit system in its widest sense, the ratio is not defensible in view of the banks' commitments to pay legal tender on demand; but it is not an externally imposed ratio. This, however, is a minor point compared with the truth or otherwise of the first assumption. On this, Dr. Leaf supplies his critics with an answer to him. "Currency notes are a *loan to the Government*, nominally repayable on demand." (Our italics.) Then who are the lenders? And how do they lend them if they do not first create them? We do not want to take a debating advantage out of what is a compression of his argument, but that phrase "a loan to the Government" sums up the relative position of the Government and the banking system. Whether the Government borrows currency in the above literal sense, or "as good as" borrows it, the fact that all Governments depend continuously on bank accommodation is a final refutation of the argument that the State is the master of the banks. Lastly, whatever Dr. Leaf may believe to be the relationship, surely the projected legislation by which the control of currency is to be transferred by the State to the Bank of England will destroy the value of his main argument.

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Dr. Leaf gives an illustration to show how a bank cannot create credit.

> "When a bank makes an advance to a customer it undertakes . . . to transfer sums from his account independently of any balance which may be standing to his credit. The advance is actually effected only when the customer's cheque . . . is presented to the customer's bank in the form of a charge by another bank in the clearing. This charge is met in the cheque on the Bank of England by which the settlement is made; that is, the balance at the Bank of England of the paying bank is diminished, and that of the collecting bank is increased. There is no alteration whatever in aggregate deposits."

This is not meeting the issue fairly. It only proves that a single bank cannot create credit to any appreciable extent *while the others are not doing so*. It is obvious that if one bank does all the lending it will do all the paying out of clearing cheques to the other banks, and will soon reduce its balance at the Bank of England to zero. But that is not the question. The question is, what would happen if all the banks were making advances at one and the same time? None of them would, *of necessity*, have to draw on its Bank of England balance at all; it is not inconceivable that their several advances would equate with each other and that, on balance, none of them would owe the others anything. But even accepting Dr. Leaf's chosen illustration, directly the lending bank grants a loan it creates an equivalent deposit in its own books. The borrower's cheques may transfer that deposit to some other bank, and that other bank may draw on the lending bank for the amount. But the new deposit remains in existence, and until the borrower repays it the aggregate deposits of the banking system as a whole remain increased by its amount. When Dr. Leaf says "There is no alteration whatever in aggregate deposits," he is referring to bankers' deposits in the Bank of England. That is irrelevant. What his critics are referring to is customers' deposits in the joint-stock banks. To sum up the controversy. Dr. Leaf means to say that banks cannot create the *basis* of credit. He admits that, given the basis, they can create credit. So the root of the matter is whether banks can command an increase in the basis of credit if they so desire. To that there can be only one answer.

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Dr. Leaf's illustration has a wider significance than lies in its immediate application. Just as it is true that what one bank cannot do alone all can do together, so it is true of industries. The solvency of the single bank, he instanced, was not threatened by its issuing new credit, but by the assumed fact that the others were not doing so. Similarly the Social Credit proposal of selling consumable goods below cost—another form of credit issue—only appears impracticable on the hypothesis that what would injure one industry would injure all together. In either case the risk which the single bank, or the single industry, would run would be that of being swallowed up by the others who were practising a contrary policy. But should all of them risk being swallowed up simultaneously the risk vanishes. Everything depends upon a united policy. The Big Five, by coincidently and equally creating credit, are really feeding each other with new deposits without necessarily depleting the special deposits which each of them keeps at the Bank of England. The only check would be if the Bank of England required them collectively to increase their aggregate deposits with it; but that is beyond our immediate point. Similarly, were all industries to sell consumable goods at a margin below cost, they would be feeding each other with credit. Industry as a whole would recover as much money from consumers as before; but would deliver more goods against it. Its collective risk would not be financial but economic: it would involve increased activity for the same revenue. But since all parties to production are also consumers, they would receive compensation *in kind* for their extra effort. This analysis is not put forward as a suggested scheme, for it would not of itself settle the major economic problem; but it at least shows that there is nothing inherently nonsensical in the idea of a national retail discount. The practical difficulty is, of course, to get industries to agree on the same policy, just as the banks have done. That policy must arise from recognition of the fact that if increased output at price below cost would do them at least no particular financial harm, neither will decreased output at price in excess of cost do them any particular good. It should be clear, too, that if increased output following upon price-cuts is ruled out as stupid, then the prevailing ideal of price-cuts following upon increased output is equally stupid. The next step is to consider whether united industry and united banking cannot deal with the problem at both ends at once, i.e., to work out a system of financing increased output and price-cuts separately but simultaneously. There is evidence that our national banking authorities are now in two minds about considering such a policy. But they do not see how they can initiate it while other national systems do not. They are entangled in the by-laws of the international credit trust. It is for industrialists to help their own banking system to recover its independence. If shortage of currency is the real difficulty, and the State controls it, then the policy of industry is to get the Treasury to sanction an increase. But if the real difficulty is that, currency or no currency, our credit policy is dominated by alien influences, then there is nothing for it but to concentrate on diplomacy reinforced by alliances and armaments.

* * *

The *Daily Chronicle* has been drawing attention to the prevalent restriction of output

> "The Stevenson rubber scheme is a well-known case in point. The policy of the Indian Tea Association seems to be another. . . . The American cotton-growers talk of planting 25 per cent. less area next year. The Egyptian Government has announced officially that it will bring in a Bill to restrict Egypt's cotton acreage to one-third for the next three years. The Cuban cane-growers have recommended to the President of Cuba a limitation of the coming sugar crop to 4,500,000 tons."

Then follows a pertinent comment:—

> "After all the obloquy one has heard heaped on the cotton-boll weevil, it is curious to notice the tone of regret in which the bumper American cotton-crop is explained by the rarity of weevils this year. As though wheat-farmers should complain that there were not enough rats."

The *Daily Chronicle* remarks that as an immediate policy restriction is probably inevitable, but points out its international danger, instancing Mr. Hoover's denunciation of the Stevenson rubber scheme. It fears that these provisional checks may be "systematised and perpetuated into a chronic curtailment of Nature's bounty, and a deliberate impoverisment of mankind."

> "Its remedy is not obvious; but almost certainly it must come to be before long an important subject of consultation between Governments."

Well, remedies cannot become obvious while they are boycotted. There has been a lot of fuss in the Press of late on the growing practice of writers to reveal matters belonging to the life of our high politicians. But that evil is nothing to the reticence of both Press and politicians on matters belonging to the life of every citizen.

* * *

In this month's *Banker* Lord Hunsdon replies to Mr. Snowden's eulogy of the Bankers' Manifesto on Free Trade. He drops on him in respect of his assertion that international trade is the exchange of goods.

> "This, of course, is correct in the long run, but the run is often very long; for nations continue for years with the balance of trade against them, and from time to time redress their excess of imports by the issue of foreign loans, which we can take as payment for our excess exports. Therefore, it is not altogether true to say that we cannot sell unless we buy. . . ."

This argument is not new to readers of these Notes,

but it is neatly put, and worth recording. He also says elsewhere:—

> "Instead of taking other States to task for their 'unreasoning ambition to become manufacturing units' we should, I think, face the position that it involves; and that is that the 'unreasoning' world now has its own workshops and intends so far as possible to do without the 'former workshop of the world.'"

He could have made the further point that it was the "workshop of the world" which did most towards fitting out these other workshops which are now supplanting it. For how many generations have British workers gone without shirts to fill India with cotton-spinning machinery? And now they must still go without shirts because Indians are making their own. Under this "work"-economy of ours it appears that we starve to start a rival, and then starve because he starts.

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The *Banker* announces the death of Mr. Leverton Harris.

> "By his death England loses a son who has always rendered the highest service to his country when it was in his power; or when it was not, as a private gentleman, set a noble example of fortitude, fidelity, and achievement. . . . By the death of Mr. Leverton Harris the National Discount Company loses the services of a most capable and experienced director . . . whose life added lustre to the long roll of English bankers who in peace and in war have faithfully served their country."

Fulsome valedictions often mask *relief*. As Rosonov might say—"I am called a good fellow. But a good fellow *in myself*? Or *because I've gone*?" The *Banker* should be more careful. It would not like to set Mr. Harris wondering whether his death was natural after all.

* * *

A private debate between Mr. J. R. Clynes and Mr. John Wheatley took place last Saturday at Salford before an Independent Labour Party audience on the question whether Labour should again take office when in a minority. No details of the arguments or the conclusion arrived at are available. The question is complicated for those immediately interested by another, namely that they do not know what would be the composition of the Labour Cabinet. For ourselves we should unhesitatingly advise Labour to take office whenever it had the opportunity. Whether it held "Office with Power" or "Office without Power," it would not be able to pass definitely anti-Capital legislation, nor, even if it did, to command its effective administration. But that consideration does not invalidate the argument for taking office. A Cabinet, however powerless to do anything, does enjoy command over the subjects which the House shall debate. If it may not write the Law as it desires, it can, as it were, edit Hansard. Now Hansard is a propagandist organ circulating among the most powerful as well as intelligent students of economics and politics the world over. Is not such an advertisement of what Labour wants to do, and why, printed and distributed at the expense of the taxpayer, worth while? The answer, naturally, turns upon what is going to be advertised. It does not depend upon whether office is taken with power, but whether it is taken with an *Idea*. Most Labour enthusiasts will probably write this off as moonshine. We will say in reply that if there were the slightest prospect of the Social Credit idea being brought into debate by a Labour Cabinet, financial interests would take care that Labour was not trusted with office even if it had only a dozen or so followers in the House. In fact, we are inclined to suggest that the minor fact of Mr. Mosley's adhesion to the Party has been sufficient to settle definitely that Labour will not be tolerated in office unless it gets a clear majority. And already, as we have seen, Dr. Walter Leaf is busy "educating" the electors in view of the next General Election.

The Enigma of the Constitution.

A recent book* discusses the attitude of the Press during the General Strike. The only constructive suggestion in it is that the Constitution ought to allow more responsibility to the Trades Union Congress. On the informative side it is extremely valuable. Two unconstitutional defiances, by Lord Birkenhead and Sir W. Joynson Hicks respectively, hurled at the Government of the day during the Irish Crisis of 1913 are appositely quoted. An outstanding feature of this book is its competent *exposé* of the Press as a syndicated mechanism run by an oligarchy. The passing of the *Daily Chronicle* from Mr. Lloyd George's control to that of Lord Reading has taken place since the book was written; otherwise its information is up to date. For the rest, it is rather late in the day to prove and comment on the fact that Society is inimical to the demand of the workers for more food; and that it will, under pressure, waive all pretence at impartiality. The proper comment is: "Yes; but what are you going to do about it; and what will be the result if you do it?"

To these questions Mr. Martin gives no definite answer. He supplies material for an answer, however, in a passage where he checks back Sir John Simon's theory of "unconstitutionalism" as applied to the General Strike, with the following question: If a group of financiers imposed a certain policy on a Government, would that be unconstitutional? Mr. Martin would have done well to elaborate that aspect of the subject, for it leads to the vital discovery that there is now no such thing as a Constitution. The ultimate seat of power is not in Parliament, nor in the British Cabinet, nor even in the British banking system; it has been placed outside this country. Every national political constitution is merely the reflection of a single international banking constitution. Ministers of State have to act under the perpetual menace of a general strike of cosmopolitan bankers. The Dawes Pact was openly, almost derisively, driven through the so-called "Constitution" by these interests. All the politicians did was to push behind. It wouldn't have mattered a bit if they hadn't—the vehicle would have gone on. Its motive power was not public opinion, but financial credit. When Mr. J. H. Thomas tells Labour it can get everything it wants by voting, he is simply displaying his ignorance of the fact that the ballot-box has ceased to be the gear-box of Policy.

Students who want for reference a compact and efficient survey of the polemics attending the General Strike cannot do better than to buy this book.

A. B.

MAJOR DOUGLAS'S LECTURE.

Next week we shall publish Major Douglas's lecture of December 6 at Caxton Hall on the "High Wage Policy in Industry, and its Defects."

BOUND VOLUMES OF "THE NEW AGE."

At the end of October the volume covering May-October was completed. Readers who send their copies (26) to this office can have them bound and returned carriage paid for the inclusive charge of 7s. 6d. We may also remind them that for a half-yearly subscription of 25s. they are entitled to 26 weekly copies and a bound volume in addition at the end of the period, carriage paid. Single volumes, otherwise, cost 15s., carriage paid. Orders should be addressed to the Manager, THE NEW AGE, 70, High Holborn, W.C.1.

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* "The British Public and the General Strike." By Kingsley Martin. (Hogarth Press. 3s. 6d.)

On the Bummel.

IV.

AM NECKAR.—(*Concluded*).

That day will be remembered when, at dusk, some fifteen kilometres remained to be tramped to Mecca. Mecca was Wimfen, a charming little medieval town known of old to Araminta, and so bright in her imagination that we determined to sleep there and nowhere else. Fortified with Lager Bier, bread and cheese, taken restfully as became those who had adjured Time for the nonce, and digested with a few songs that rang surprisingly in the timbered room of the inn, we set out again over wide uplands towards the forest ridge, showing dim in the distance. As night fell, the road lay through the forest, and dropping into step we passed the miles with the strange ease that comes of associated movement. All the tunes that beat for walking, and many others, livened our steps.

Wimfen under moonlight, with its steep crooked streets, its squares with leaded fountains, its twin-towered church, its overhanging houses of wood and brick, its jaunty roofs, unspoiled and undilapidated, is a rare delight. Perched high above the Neckar, with broad lands across the river, sweeping away to distant hills upstream, and to nearer ranges downward, where the long curve is abruptly cut by an encroaching spur, the little town is full of that insistent individuality, of architect and craftsman, for which the soul faints amid the horrors of modern bourgeoisie villadom and the "dwellings" of the poor.

In this country agriculture is respected; and both men and women look happy, sane and calm—creating that background of tranquillity without which a people becomes top-heavy and the blood-stream thin. In the little towns the creations of the great Age of Faith are preserved, and the consciousness of their value is shown by the harmony of the modern building with the old.

Instinctive life is strong in the peasant, as it needs must be to give his toil such authority, and hold upon his heart as commands his unfailing acceptance without resistance or regret. The more sophisticated, as seen amongst holiday-makers from other parts of Germany, seem to retain the solidity of the peasant, too little touched with the quicker sensibility proper to those who have released themselves from the avocations of instinct. Strength is shown, and physical fitness; a fine regard for preservation of bodily well-being, seen in the practice—and evident relish—of the universal sun-and-river bathing. The men have a forcible thoroughness of demeanour; the women look reliable, and might be guessed sound counsellors in practical affairs; but neither the women nor the men give generally the impression that they have entered seriously upon the path of refinement and spiritualisation which demands something better than the status of the *Hausfrau* for its personal ground in the women, and other aspirations than an active brain in a well-kept body for the men. Here are people firmly standing on the earth, enjoying work, and acquiring that stored energy of tissue and nerve upon which intenser life must draw for its sustenance. If more of them can lift their gaze a little above the level, what unique contribution to the achievement of European unity and even of World unity may not be theirs!

* * *

Packs had been a little heavy on our shoulders; the river was alluring; we would beg, borrow, or steal a boat, and gently paddle down in a couple of days or less to Heidelberg. Hopes were dashed when no one in Wimfen would aid the project. But such things could be done at Eberbach, it was said. For Eberbach we set out, by way of the meadows, swinging across the river on the ferry that moves from bank to bank by an ingenious use of the current of the stream. A very long wire is attached to the middle of a cable stretched above the river from poles erected on either bank about a hundred yards up stream; the wire is divided some fifty yards distant from the ferry boat, and attached in such a way that a small winch serves to shorten one end and so bring the pull obliquely upon the current, and the boat obediently crosses to the side nearest the shortened end. This type of ferry is in general use on the Neckar, and even on the great stream of the Rhine in a slightly modified form.

Perdita had "taken" every delectable corner in Wimfen, and the heat of the day was easily spent amongst the hay-makers beside the river. They insisted upon being photographed; and the jolly grandfather, who crowned the first group with a great truss of hay, poised aloft for a moment before pitching it into the wagon, gave his name and address for the picture to be sent him. The tumbling river, running so swiftly under the cliff, was a lure not to be withstood, and hours passed in which we dropped in up the stream and emerged dripping far below the town. Regretfully we turned our faces away from *Wimfen-am-Berg* with the westering sun in our eyes, a little sadly, for our direction had been Eastward, and it would have been joyful to go further.

Fourth class rail is cheap, and Eberbach, that we might only have seen in passing, but for the reluctance of Wimfen to provide us with a boat, is beautiful in itself and lies at the foot of a curved and wooded ravine leading up to the *Katzenbückel*, the highest mountain in the Odenwald, whose round head we had dimly seen in the far distance from the tower on top of the *Konigstuhl* above Heidelberg.

We slept within sound of the hastening river, and in the morning a boat was obtained though not without alarums and excursions. The sun danced upon the swirling waters, the wooded heights emerged from their morning haze to show all the beauty of varied foliage under a brilliant sky and give marvellous colour to the river in the quiet stretches. Bright little towns nestled along the banks and came suddenly into view, to be lost again as suddenly when the next curve of the stream gave a new vista. When the sun grew hot we landed to doff garments, and were soon afloat again clad for swimming. Lucien was the first to dive overboard, and pronounce the river deep and good; after that we were floating and swimming half a mile or more at a time in the soft, tepid water, whirled down the rapids, and carried gently where the stream flowed decorously, one keeping the boat under control with the sculls. There was a moment when she stranded on a rock in a dangerous spot, and we had visions of our entire kit being lost, but we got under her and away she went again, leaving us spluttering in the sudden depth. That was a glorious day, and when we handed our craft over to the ferryman at Heidelberg, just after sunset, it was with wonder and gratitude for a new experience that we stepped ashore for our last evening in the valley of the Neckar. It was hardly believable that we were not still supported as we had been in the water, so light was our tread upon the earth.

THE FOURTH.

PRESS EXTRACTS.

"The British create an enormous reservoir of credit in discounting commercial paper. A manufacturer in Manchester pays for his raw material in a bill of thirty, sixty, or ninety days. That bill, called "white paper," passes from hand to hand and *pays a score of debts before it is finally presented for payment*. The result is a stable structure of credit which ties up no gold and embarrasses no bank. . . . It does not seem that instalment loans are any more dangerous than the British financing arising out of the discounting and rediscounting of domestic commercial paper. We have undoubtedly tapped a new reservoir of credit."—"*Barron's Weekly*," August 23.

Views and Reviews.

METROPOLITAN CIVILISATION.

III.

When London was farther from the country reckoned in terms of transport, and nearer reckoned in terms of ideas, the country-woman used to speak with wonder about the doings of the fine folks in town; and there she left the matter, pursuing her own duties as before. Now that the train, motor-car, kinema, and newest but not last, broadcasting, carry metropolitan civilisation, under the guise of enlightenment, to the remotest corners of "the provinces," cosmopolitanism insinuates itself into every mind. That mental impotence symptomatic of metropolitan life which makes it necessary for the individual always to be catered for, and not capable even of amusing himself, gradually takes hold everywhere, until the villager begins to suffer from that awful terror of solitude which makes London and its suburbs what they are. Put two men together, they are nearly certain to be bored; separate them, and they perish. Man in the city has become the creature of a complex environment of organisation and machinery, without which he is helpless.

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Under the influence of what the city calls education the folk-culture that made each valley a spiritual unit has been nearly destroyed. The villagers' competition to be first in the street with the latest London or New York composition has thrown the folk-song into limbo. Instead of taking his songs from his grandfather and the village versifier who busks around the inns, the local comedian gets his song from the *News of the World*. The young girl with a good natural voice, instead of deriving from the metropolis the helpful tuition it is her right to receive, hears Melba on a gramophone, or Tetrazzini on the wireless, which, when she has read the metropolitan advertisement falsely uttered as criticism, demonstrates her hopeless inferiority and renders her to all intents dumb. If she remembers in her despair some playmate who left the village for expensive lessons from the great masters in London, she does not wisely condemn the emigrant for failing to return and teach her, but foolishly yearns to follow to the same artificial light. Thereupon she copies the London fashions from the picture-paper, or the fashions of cosmopolitan millionairedom from the Hollywood film, and makes her ambition in life the reduction of her figure to that of a barren boy, in the naïve belief that the pictures really spring from the spontaneous enthusiasm of cultivated journalists—who must be vastly her superiors—for the portrayed forms.

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Her brother, subject to the same mass production of suggestion, is rapidly equipped with a personality hardly differing from that of any other boy in any other village. Wherever he goes, from the infant's room in the local school—when they have a separate room—to the imitation affair at the theatre in the nearest town enthusiastically advertised as "a full London company," which he visits by motor-bus, he comes into touch with no effort, no opinion, no conversation, that has not for its source the superficial and shapeless machine of London. England becomes one city—London. One upon the heels of another provincial towns have been taken unconscious of themselves; they have thrown away their individuality for the pride of copying London. Their market-places are rendered ugly and unnatural by feeble electric-signs, and their shop-fronts and streets have been rebuilt by architects and shopkeepers whose hypnotised minds contained only one vision, that of Oxford Street.

* * *

Thus the thinking human being conscious of directing his own will and spirit is aborted. It is easier to hand one's self over to the herd and do "what is expected." All originality is suspect. Independence of the best kind, reflected in truthfulness, is regarded as aggressive when it is not, and has often to be aggressive for its existence sake. We have specialised even the making of opinion, which the multitude buys and follows under the delusion that the democracy which results is also enlightened. Scarcely a piece of news of importance, to the individual, the nation, or the world, that is not coloured to a degree that makes it falsehood. In the full glare of the mighty organisations of Press and wireless for spreading information, only the disarming and disabling trivialities are broadcast, while our national relations with foreign countries, the desperate state of our trade, the actual opinions and attitudes of political and real governors, are kept in closer secrecy than ever before. The most prominent national industry has for its sole product a condition of optimism that every journalist in Fleet Street knows to be without justification.

* * *

Under the influence of the crowded metropolis, whose very daily life depends on tolerance without distinction, the individual has at last degenerated to a simple mechanism of five—or fewer—senses, whose continued activity requires ceaseless titillation; and which, to go on bearing titillation, have to be protected with mechanical aids such as spectacles. If the sense of smell were of as great biological importance in the city as the sense of sight two-thirds the population at least would require some magnifying instrument; if scents could be kept separate as sights can—and noises more or less—the miserable Londoner would be bombarded with odours for advertisement, as he is dazzled in every street, and treated to a bar of gramophone, or to an idiotic phrase of some speech through a loud speaker, from every other shop doorway.

* * *

The metropolitan, as I have long noticed, loses his sense of smell. Although his eyes have to be skinned for not seeing, and at the same time skinned for seeing danger, and his ears tuned for telephone conversation at the same time as insensitive to pandemonium, his nose has merely to cut out petrol fumes and render no further service. He can bolt his food while reading the paper, without either taste or smell. During the long coal stoppage wood cutting has come into its own again in the country, and storm-broken branches, of little use as timber, have been worth the labour of sawing and chopping. This is how Pamela Hinkson describes it: "All day long in the wood house is the smell of newly-cut wood, a smell to be counted with such delights as the smell of apples in a loft, of wood smoke, of earth newly turned to the sky, and rotting leaves on an autumn day." Before the metropolitan has read through that he ought to be conscious that it is not sex alone that he has repressed instead of sublimating; it is also the earth, whose sap no longer rises in him.

* * *

Unless advantage is taken of civilisation to add to individual human accomplishment without losing consciousness of the earth, England now is doomed. Industrialism is no longer enough. The Imperial Conference ought to teach England that future prestige must be founded on future culture, and that her past, good, bad, or indifferent, can neither damn nor save her. This life of mere reaction to stimulant, in which the city multitude wrings its hands of responsibility like Pilate, must end in decline. If this island, the virility and originality of whose people placed it in a dangerous position of leadership, and the adventurousness of whose children led to the Aryanisation of a great portion of the planet, would not be a land of contemptible and pompous impotence, metropolitan civilisation will have to be revolutionised.

R. M.

Modern Letters.

The *New Coterie** has achieved its first volume, the issue for the current quarter being the fourth, and its editor courageously intends to continue. Notwithstanding the pessimism of Sir Edmund Gosse, quoted both in the first issue and in the fourth, who said that "the whole pretence of a public love of literature is a delusion," the *New Coterie* has faith in its own power to live on "printing original creative work of distinction, irrespective of the artistic tendency of the author," who has to "satisfy the sole criterion of merit, whether he has received general recognition or not." I sympathise with the editor of the *New Coterie*. His challenge to the Pharisaical critics who can give no hope of artistic salvation to the philistine public has my support.

* * *

Literature is choked with weeds. The world is a jungle of books, among which there is not light for new books to be seen. In the age before printing, a book had to show merit for the arduous labour of copying it to be undertaken. Printing, compulsory education, and the centralisation of opinion-making, have handed the enormously extended reading public over to the journalist. It is with literature as with the work of the craftsman; they are too long in the making for fast livers to want them, since they also require leisure for appreciation. The great writer sometimes, of course, breaks through. From the public of cultured people, through the university man, and down to the elementary school mill-girl who reads *Peg's Paper*, such a writer as Conrad has permeated as far as any artist, before the advent of cultural Utopia, could hope to go.

* * *

Nearly every aspirant to literature, now that gentlemen recognise no duties, has to earn his living or augment his literary earnings in some menial way, by journalism or by a profession. For a considerable part of most of his days he is compelled to suffer under the same conditions which produce the lamentably inert public. He can swear at the public if he likes; he can curse himself if he will; and the second course is the more realistic, since not only has the public less anatomy than a corporation, but the few members of the public who hear him are already on his side. How wide a public does the intending man of letters covet? If he believes that any artist, present or future, has a right to as many readers as the composer of a best-seller his place is not in pure literature. It is in something much nearer propaganda.

* * *

Pure literature at present reminds me of a man who continues papering his bedroom when the house is on fire in the cellar. If the artist is aware of this, and nevertheless determined to leave some cultural trace for those who come to rebuild, his act may be heroic. Such instances are rare. Pure literature, instead of being the transmutation of unsatisfied longing to beauty, betrays the diseases of its age, and cherishes them. Our art lacks exaltation; there is no love in it. Not only are we all psychologists, we are nearly all ironists. Too many young writers behave like disillusioned old men whose cantankerous presence furnishes no aid, counsel, or experience, to their families; and who turn their dwelling to a madhouse by their joyless mockery.

* * *

Art for art's sake, I am afraid, is now in only the rarest instances an aesthetic religion; it is rather the refuge of those who fail to do what they are impelled to do for life's sake. As a consequence the work produced is frequently disfigured by—I apologise for the psycho-analytic jargon, but the disorders of the age enforce the pathological terms of the age—a sadistic and masochistic motive, which apparently stimulates no will to bear the agony of resolution. Our writers appear as vexed with themselves as they have every right to be with the society which repudiates art. They do not put out their own eyes, but they come near to doing so; for they largely ignore what they should render conscious, namely, the awful, gnawing, helplessness of their generation in the face of decay, and weave designs of trivialities that everybody is aware of. An asylum from the plague is no place for *creation*.

* * *

I read Mr. Rys Davies' "Mr. Evans Number Six" through with keen interest, although I was almost turned away by the first sentence. "There were twenty houses in Ash-tip Row, all joined together in a coating of grey cement, each containing four rooms, and at the back a strip of barren earth with the water-closet standing at the end." It was obvious, however, that Mr. Davies knew his mining colony. His atmosphere was real, his subsequent characterisation real. The story told of a childless miner's wife, who was ready to die to enforce the gratification of her ambition to be first in the row, even at the cost of putting her good-natured husband into hopeless debt by purchasing, when a neighbour got a piano, an organ that nobody could play. The story is a miniature work of art; but it is not pure literature. It is too cruel to its helpless, unconscious, victim. I feared, when the houses were called Ash-tip Row, good vernacular though it is, that Mr. Evans meant to be cruel, and to lay it on thick. He knows Ash-tip Row—I know it. We also know that he has brought better themes from it than the insane ambition of a lower class barren wife. Better ideas knock at his consciousness for expression. Passion against the inheritors of culture who have forsworn it is justified, whatever their rank. But Mr. Evans ought to forbear from cruelty against the misery of miners. Art should select the things that will matter to eternity, and the camel-like working-class is one of them. Mr. Evans knows the working-class too well to believe that they merit cruelty. If he can operate on them so as to open their consciousness, that is another story. For that they will suffer in the end gratefully.

* * *

I regret that I cannot treat the whole issue with the same detail. The election for carnal cruelty appears again in Mr. T. F. Powys' "The Bride," which for this reason does not to my judgment warrant the imagination and technique expended on it. Mr. Gerald Bullett nearly composed a fine picture of senility in "The Grasshopper." Yet I saw no necessity whatever for the old man's dream, after a fit of passion that could not effect its purpose, of walking briskly up the hill to an inn where beer was free and served in quarts under the sign of the King of Heaven, and the landlordship of God the Father. There may be a place in minor letters for that fantasy; its place was not in "The Grasshopper."

* * *

Mr. Louis Golding's "Luigi of Cantanzaro" recalled Mr. Georg Brandes' answer to the Czar of Russia when Brandes was forbidden to lecture in Russia because he was a Jew, and also that magnificent debate of the bishops in the "Return of the Hero," by the late Darrel Figgis. It reflects the sincerity of neither of these, mainly because the author could not maintain an austere distance from "acid-drops." Against the temptation to refer to everything in the *New Coterie*, I can only sum up by saying that it is thoroughly representative of the Art for Art's sake group of modern writers, and that

* "The New Coterie." (E. Archer, 68, Red Lion-street, W.C.1. 2s. 6d.)

the student of modern movements in literature cannot, in my opinion, follow his study thoroughly without seeing it.

* * *

The poetry is well chosen. "Chopin Nocturne, Op. 9," by Mr. Paul Selver, shows the genuine touch of this magician of word-patterns. After reading it several times I refrain from quotation because the whole fits together so well that only full quotation would be satisfactory. There are four poems by Mr. Selver in all, the last "Somewhat in the Manner of a Certain Poet," in Mr. Selver's excellent parody style. Mr. Rupert Croft-Cooke's "Holy Matrimony" is clever, and its title, as might be expected, imparts irony into the verse. Mr. Croft-Cooke hides behind his irony a touch of sentiment that he seems to fancy not quite respectable in his walk of society.

A. N.

Mr. Belloc's Real Objection.

It was in the interest of the Catholic Truth that Mr. Belloc challenged Mr. Wells's competence to write his so successful "Outline of History." But the acrimony of their subsequent dispute has narrowed it down, absurdly enough, to the question of the weight of recent professorial opinion against "Natural Selection," upon which Mr. Belloc now appeals to the umpire for a victory on points.* Natural Selection is *one* of the means by which the transformation of species is supposed to have been effected, and to which naturalists since Darwin have attached very various degrees of importance. Mr. Belloc quotes from some of those who thought it less important. But one cannot help asking, "Does Mr. Belloc really care so very much for the theories of modern professors?" Of course not. He wanted to beat a dog with its own tail. And, however sincerely Mr. Wells may have felt it incumbent upon him to reply to a noted writer's criticism of his work, it was those accusations of "ignorance" that stirred his blood and made the very pen leak in his pocket.

This is a pity, because in the origin of the quarrel it is possible to see a deeper animus, an enmity real, honourable and indeed suprapersonal. The "Outline of History" is a portentous event to a Catholic with an intellectual interest in his religion; for it is not a mere history, it is much more like a Bible. It begins with a Genesis, ends with a Revelation, and is packed throughout with special moral valuations. To any man of rudimentary religious sense, who knows the importance of cosmogony, it is not a light matter to see such a thing done as a best seller, and all *from one man's point of view*. It is a portent of Babel in opinion, and Armageddon in politics.

Any novelist is entitled to write a partisan history for fun, but is a man whose mind works habitually upon the plane of Mr. William Clissold's entitled to give out a cosmogany, or to be thought competent for a function formerly allowed only to priest and pandit? Mr. Wells would certainly see no objection. He admits that religion, by giving foundation to moral norms, has been a factor in the establishment of our human being and culture. But that, he thinks, is past and done with. We may now safely become anarchists in thought and opinion, since our actions are all controlled by government, and government controlled by industry and finance—which may be trusted to make the whole thing pay. His fleeting ideas of aristocracy are not of aristocracy of character, so much as of expertise. In Mr. Belloc the instinct for freedom works clean contrary. *He* would rather surrender his thought, or anyone else's, to the guidance of the greatest traditional school of philosophers, leaving nations and individuals free to work out their special conclusions with the utmost possible freedom. Of these two extreme views, I confess to a preference for Mr. Belloc's.

The Catholic Church has the custody of the greatest body of practical philosophy that exists, at all events in the Western Hemisphere. It is still the greatest school in the world for anyone who would learn how to think, how to draw correct conclusions from given premises. Let us remember that Scholasticism in Europe was the precursor of the experimental sciences, without being beguiled into the question of how much that "*post hoc*" is "*propter hoc*." Now, whether present-day Catholics can *use* their vast philosophy, whether they can impress new matter with the magnificent form of their organum of thinking, is quite another matter. In truth, they seem intimidated by the prestige of so many masters. Strong in the power of the Fathers, they become weak and unadventurous children. They use it against wrong thinking, which is only half the problem set by life.

The Catholic attitude towards Transformism and Evolution especially shows this. For it is not Darwin, nor Haeckel, nor all the professors in Europe, who are making the world believe somehow in Transformism. It is the simple sunlight! Sunlight reflected from the things exhibited in every public museum all the world over. There are displayed before the eyes of everyone the changing forms of terrestrial life, the variations and gradations of its structure. That is new knowledge of reality, and it is nothing short of a disaster to Europe that Catholics have no courage to say anything about it. You will find, in Cardinal Mercier's "Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy" "the briefest consideration of Transformism as" followed by the opinion of the great majority of naturalists" followed by nothing but a fool-proof demonstration that the case is not proven. Indeed it is not. But is a purely agnostic attitude the *safest*, even if it were the most honest and courageous, concerning facts of the greatest importance in cosmogony? Cosmogony is vital to religion: it is the inspired understanding of all the facts of human knowledge, the frame into which all fits. Religion is what can reveal all the greatest facts of life, especially generation and decease, as the symbols of spiritual experience. Its business is certainly not to negate all explanation of life, but explain it most profoundly, and even to explain all the explanations. It is not enough to say that no one knows.

The wisdom which is now frozen into the crystalline structure of Catholic doctrine is nevertheless the living water of truth: and not only paleontology, but the whole of post-Renascence European knowledge, is only capable of being rightly focused and brought to its clear human meaning by the light of Christian intelligence. The urgency of that need prevents me from applauding Mr. Belloc's scoring of points which it was not worth his while to make.

From the standpoint of those who have the Catholic Truth at heart there can be only one answer to the "Outline of History," and that would be to work for the production of several more of such books, written by individuals who have the Catholic Truth at heart, and reason at head, but are yet free spirits enough to believe their own intuition in interpretation.

If not, if Christendom cannot work to produce another Genesis, the Church may save itself from some sins of commission—it will not save Europe from damnation. But if European Christianity fails in its true task of redeeming knowledge by wisdom: it will nevertheless be done; in Asia, Africa or America. The dry bones of paleontology will certainly be gathered up into the living revelation of God to Man.

PHILIPPE MAIRET.

* "Mr. Belloc Still Objects." By Hilaire Belloc. (Sheed and Ward. 1s.)

Is there a "Mystery of Three"?

By George Ryley Scott, F.R.A.I., F.Ph.S., F.Z.S.

II.

Every concept at any precise moment of its existence must be one of three things; a fiction, a hypothesis, or a fact; its precise momentary category being determined entirely by the peculiar circumstances that surround it. In other words its classification is absolutely decided by its immediate relation to its context. This sums up Vaihinger's philosophy of "As If," and at the same time goes much further, for Vaihinger presented an incomplete uprooting of mentality's basic limitations. He affirmed that while a fact or a hypothesis may become a fiction, no fiction can ever become anything but a fiction. But not only can it, but it does, and has done. For in its final analysis every fact is a fiction. Change the context of your fact, and immediately it becomes a fiction.

Tracked down, space, time, atoms, electrons, are mere symbols, in themselves as meaningless as the unknown quantity x. The earth, said the ancients, is the centre of the universe. This, for a thousand years, reigned as a fact. Then came Copernicus and Galileo with proof that this long-lived fact was in reality a fiction; that the sun is the centre of the universe. Finally comes Einstein, who says, in effect, both are facts, both are fictions; the earth is the centre of the universe in certain circumstances, the sun is the centre in others.

Every definition must of necessity be in terms of others. Every concept reasoned out to its ultimate base is revealed as revolving round a mythical centre. Blot out the solar system as a system and where is the sun? To actually know what anything is transcends the possibilities of knowledge; all we can know is what we suppose it to be.

Thus such a thing as absolute knowledge is non-existent. Thus, in turn, it is much easier to define any concept in negative terms than in positive terms. Indeed, the ultimate revealing of a truth consists in the realisation of what it cannot be. Than the relativity of this position no greater degree of accuracy is possible. For instance, what is a woman? Readily comes the answer: the female of a man. But this is merely saying that a woman is a man that is not a man. And this, I submit, is the nearest one can get to the truth.

Obviously, however, for practical purposes we have to accept certain hypotheses and on occasion certain fictions tentatively as facts, and it is these which form the bases of what for want of a better term are called the "exact" sciences.

While in the admirable first part of his article Mr. Newsome gives evidence of at any rate a realisation of the fringe of all this, he does not dig quite deep enough, his excavating operations being seriously hampered by mystic beliefs, and in consequence he fails to suspect the ultimate truth of his own tentative implications. Ignoring this, he makes one gigantic stride and embraces the only conceivable concept left that can be offered as an explanation of the inexplainable—to wit, mysticism.

Thus the metaphysician's initial assumption that one consistent plan is behind the running of the universe is no more than a hypothesis. Whether it is a fact or a fiction no man living can prove or disprove. If someone comes along to-morrow and asserts that the sun is some gigantic animal generating enormous power through the operating of a gargantuan treadmill, it is impossible to disprove the truth of this hypothesis. All we can do is to assert that in any case there is no evidence in support of the hypothesis, and that in relation to current concepts it has every appearance of being a myth. Then along comes the metaphysician and affirms that the importance of any naturalistic explanation, owing to the fact of its being restricted by inhibitions of its own making, renders the truth only realisable by one who, according to Merezhkovsky, is possessed of spiritual insight beyond the ordinary.

Obviously for the sake of mere sanity, for the sake of mental coherence, the necessity for tentative assumptions, which may be looked upon as unlimited numbers of algebraical x symbols, must be admitted. Without these the whole of civilisation, of family life, of existence itself, would go to pieces —we should return to pure animalism and share the culture of the anthropoid ape. Even the metaphysician can only explain and elaborate his thesis in terms of the frankly mechanistic.

To say that out of the realisation of this universal mythical basis, fructifying in the questioning of the actual existence of any objective world at all outside the limits of each person's individual experience, emerges inevitably an extended pragmatism as the only conceivable logical philosophy is to make an altogether unwarranted assumption. Pragmatism *per se* is anathema to the mechanistic theorists.

The need for truth is the need for relative truth, crystallising into the putting to each hypothesis the test of agreement with reality as existent at the moment. Thus the fire and thunder Jehovah as still visualised by the older school of evangelists, by the Billy Sundays, Gipsy Smiths, and Woodbine Willies, is greeted with roaring horse laughs by the intelligentsia, who can demonstrate satisfactorily its mythical basis by proving that its fundament is a pagan myth. But if someone gets up and affirms that personal contact with fire will result in severe injury, one can easily prove the hypothesis to be an existent truth.

It is precisely here that the scientific concept differs from the metaphysical. Allowably each in its ultimate analysis bears the same relation to the mythical focus expressible only in terms of the algebraical symbol. But while the dangers of dynamite are demonstrable by the mere use of it, and cannot be disproved by any other conceivable explanation, the concept of Christianity is explainable as a figment of primitive mentality and can bring no evidence forward in support of its claims outside its own basic hypothesis. Thus we reach the weak point of the trinitarian theory, and at the same time revolve back to the explanation of its origin and synthesis elaborated in my first article. This naturalistic explanation, I submit, has not been in any way invalidated by Mr. Newsome's mystic synthesis. Further, I submit there is not even a *prima facie* case for any supernatural hypothesis such as the "Law of Three."

The mere piling up of mystical concepts is no proof or satisfactory affirmation so long as no supporting facts are drawn from other fields. Boiled down to its vestigial essence mysticism generally, including the trinitarian hypothesis, merely resolves itself into the dictum of Tertullian: "Certum est quia impossibile est."

AUTUMN LOVE SONG.

I.

The wind comes down before the creeping night
And thou, my love, art hid among the green
Long grasses. And the dark steals up between
Each leaf, as through the shadow quick with fright
The startled hare leaps up and out of sight.

II.

The hedges whisper in their loaded boughs
Where warm birds slumber, pressing wing to wing
All pulsing faintly, like a muted string
Above us, where we weary of our vows—
And, hidden underground, the soft moles drowse.

LIONEL GRANT.

Music.

Kreisler: Rosenthal: Curzon: The Panatrope.

That noble violinist Kreisler, at the Queen's Hall, on November 3, revealed a depth of thought and beauty in the Elgar violin concerto that others pass by unsuspected. The violinist's peculiarly individual qualities combine together to make him the unmatched and, one is almost tempted to say, unmatchable interpreter of this work. Kreisler's playing, over and above its technical fineness and beauty, its superb style and charm, is penetrated always with a virile tenderness which makes his playing unique. Here is no pretty gentleman or lady fiddling on cat's gut, but a masculine personality on which foundation is laid the structure of his art. Kreisler is not ashamed to be moved by the music he plays, and he arouses answering emotions in us by the power and conviction of his own. The Brahms concerto, for all that it was superbly played, seemed very stale after the Elgar, the greatness of which impresses itself on one more and more with repeated hearings, and I am more than ever tempted to declare that no greater violin concerto exists with the possible exceptions of the Bach works and the great Reger in A major.

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Rosenthal, at his recital on November 9, exhibited his usual strange mixture of great qualities and equally great defects, flabby rhythm, sagging phrases and slackness of texture, together with finger work of often sparkling clearness, although even this failed him several times in his own second Viennese Rhapsody on themes of Johann Strauss—a delicious confection in the elegant manner of his *Carnaval de Vienne*.

* * *

The best performance of the Bax second piano sonata that I have heard, a work I generally dislike, and that this performance almost made me like, was that of Mr. Clifford Curzon, at the Grotrian Hall on November 17. Mr. Curzon did a lot towards tightening up its straggling texture, and played it with understanding, imagination, and sympathy. I should like to hear him in the very fine Symphonic Variations by the same composer, a work, like all first class modern work, shamefully neglected. Mr. Curzon was by no means as successful with the Liszt Sonata, which was hurried, scrambled, unclear in detail, and spasmodic in conception.

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The activity in the production of new reproducing instruments continues unabated. The latest comer (about which I read nearly two years ago in American musical papers) is the Brunswick Panatrope, an instrument which I have not yet been able thoroughly to test. It is, to judge from one or two short hearings, little short of marvellous, and records played on it side by side with the hitherto latest and newest models of machines of other leading makers startlingly demonstrate its superiority in all the qualities that a musician demands—clarity, definition, fidelity, freedom, volume and sonority without harshness or blatancy. The fourth side of the recent electric Polydor "Heldenleben" records (a very remarkable set, obtainable of Imhof, of 110, New Oxford Street, the Polydor agents), the wonderful G flat major section, surged round one almost as though a great orchestra were near, and induced an appreciable part of the delightful thrill that this triumphant music does in actual performance. The Panatrope is unfortunately very costly—over £100—but compared with the atrocities for which we have hitherto been asked to pay £50 and £70, it is cheap. The instrument can be seen and heard at Imhof above mentioned, and at 34, George Street, Hanover Square.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

Art.

Paintings of Chile. By Alvaro Guevara. At the Leicester Galleries.

Mr. Guevara (whose portrait of Miss Edith Sitwell hangs in the Tate Gallery) has returned after a stay of four years in his native land, and if his reading of Chile is compelling its revelation of an interesting personality is more so. Little is known, in this country, of South American painting, but Mr. Guevara's pictures may be appropriately related to those of such Spanish artists as El Greco, Zuloaga, and Gutierrez Solana, though he has little of the ecstatic spirit of the first-named.

Mr. Osbert Sitwell, in his Prefatory Note to the catalogue, says "the sequined light sparkles and flows round every object," and the adjective rightly draws attention to what is more than an air of theatrical make-believe in this Chilean's work. Something seems, so often, to obtrude itself between the reality and the pictured vision. It is as if, despite his valiant efforts to reveal its authentic glow and pulse, life's flowing blood became congealed, dried up by some inexorable force.

I remember vividly three portraits by Guevara at the National Portrait Society's Exhibition in 1921, and I wrote at the time: "The sitters are rendered lifeless by the whole manipulation (which has not the onslaught of satire) of drawing and colour together. The Viscountess Curzon, Mr. Philip Gardner, and Lady Cunard have become lay figures, and, in doing so, have provided no adequate reason for their presence." In the present show the people in "Interior" (No. 50) are like inert pieces of furniture, the roses in "Still Life" (No. 56) like artificial flowers, and in "Sun Flower" (No. 43) there is bright colour, but no flowering life. The three most ambitious paintings are frankly theatrical in origin and intention; but, in two, even the life of their own world is deadened. In "Madame Auriole as Colombine" (No. 44) the three figures have the attitudes and colour of the stage, but if their veins were pierced would not sawdust flow? "Juana Gonzalez in the part of Mdme. X" (No. 61) is constructed with the eleborate mechanism of the theatre, but the figures are shades which at a touch might crumble into dust. "The Man without a head" (No. 54) is the grim apotheosis of a puppet world and design and colour are extraordinarily appropriate to its non-human theme. It is the best of those pictures in which the artist seems dominated by a daemon from "other kingdom."

It must be admitted that the somewhat frowsty atmosphere of the stage subjects and the effect of tawdry decoration in the paintings of church images probably fairly express certain aspects of Chilean life; but no less clearly is it seen that in his landscapes and some other canvases the artist achieves a more unhindered vision and a corresponding clarity of statement. He is hampered not only by what may be atavistic traits, but by his Slade-like use, at times, of a grubby technique. In "Sapphire" (No. 60) the hint of dazzling blue is obscured by the ugliness of the black paint; in the landscapes (Nos. 51, 57, and 69), given up to the joy of pure light, scholastic dexterities are falling away; and in "Young Boy" (No. 42) and "Young Araucanian Girl" (No. 58) the painter seems set free before reality and expresses himself, as if with relief, with intense conviction. Such unembarrassed draughtmanship as is seen in these and other heads, and the revelation of an equal purity of colour in "Copihue" (No. 46) and "Dozing" (No. 64), confirm the ability of the Sitwell portrait at Millbank, a picture in which the personality of the sitter is made incandescent by glowing colour. This portrait is by far the most complete achievement Mr. Guevara has yet exhibited in London. It sets a standard by which his painting may be judged and, moreover, it shows the way to an imaginative use of colour which it is to be hoped he will develop fearlessly to the utmost of his ability.

ERNEST COLLINGS.

"THESE DAYS WE WALTZ AT TEA TIME."

Thick gobs of treacly sound
Cast up by glistening saxophones,
And the thin pouring of tonal gruel
From violins.
A gentleman maltreating a piano
Combines these diversities to form
A rhythm that is as a stirring
Of viscid tar,
And a revolving in a vat of golden syrup.
With set faces the sombre males
Revolve with silken partners,
Revolve despairingly.

By J. SOMERFIELD.

"Stimuli."

"All is not gain that is got into the purse." —So that notwithstanding my father had the happiness of reading the oddest books in the universe, and had, moreover, in himself, the oddest way of thinking that ever man in it was bless'd with, yet it had this drawback upon him, after all—that it laid him open to some of the oddest and most whimsical distresses;

. . . . . .

It is a singular blessing that nature has form'd the mind of man with the same happy backwardness and resistency against conviction, which is observed in old dogs—"of not learning new tricks."

. . . . . .

—— 'tis wrote, an' please your worships, against the spleen! in order, by a more frequent and a more convulsive elevation and depression of the diaphragm, and the succussations of the intercostal and abdominal muscles in laughter, to drive the gall and other bitter juices from the gall-bladder, liver and sweetbread of His Majesty's subjects, with all the inimicitious passions which belong to them, down into their duodenums.

("The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy")

Doubtless many readers of THE NEW AGE have received a copy of a browny-yellow brochure boldly lettered "The Outline of Success," accompanying an urgent appeal to acquire a copy of our national work of reference on terms similar to those whereby happy homes are prematurely brought into existence by philanthropic furniture dealers. Those who have read this bilious-looking booklet must have been struck by a happy juxtaposition of portrait and letterpress on p. 20. This is headed "Learning to Think," and immediately below is an excellent picture of the Dean of St. Paul's doing it for all he is worth. Struck with remorse, or fearing to offend the very reverend gentleman, the editor has added a footnote to the portrait, describing the Dean "as one of the most stimulating thinkers of the day." So he is—but he is like tobacco—he may act either as a sedative or an irritant.

Now the same may be said of the new books that chance throws in one's way. There are stimulating tomes, breathing human kindness, which react favourably on the spleen and leave the reader on better terms with his fellow-sinners; and there are others that either evoke utter boredom, or even stimulate a desire to assault both author and publisher.

Of the better sort the most recently read is "Echoes and Memories,"* by Bramwell Booth, being "mainly a series of personal impressions of various people"—and mighty interesting impressions they are too. Those who wish to add to their knowledge of popular characters by seeing them as they appear to an exceptionally lucid intellect whose appreciations are tempered by a kindly clarity, may spend a pleasant hour or two in the company of General Bramwell Booth. As a foretaste, take the incidents related when he, the old general, whom he calls "the Founder," along with Cecil Rhodes and Lord Loch, went to visit the Salvation Army Land Colony at Hadleigh:—

"We had not been sitting there (in the train) five minutes before Rhodes and the Founder were talking as hard as they could go about the poor and the miserable of the world. . . . The subject of prayer being mentioned, Mr. Rhodes referred to an incident which occurred when they were in South Africa, and, turning to Lord Loch, who was the fourth of the company, said:

"'The General has prayed for me.'

"Lord Loch replied, 'Well, I cannot say that he has ever prayed for me.'

"The General answered at once, in the most natural way, 'Then I will pray for you now'; and, kneeling down in the compartment, he asked God's blessing on both his guests."

. . . . . .

"Coming home in the train from Hadleigh, Rhodes and I were left alone. My father was in the next carriage. . . . Struck by the depression and gloom which seemed to surround the man. . . . I leaned across and said, 'Mr. Rhodes, are you a happy man? . . . I shall never forget how he threw himself back against the cushions of that first-class compartment, gripped the arm of the seat, and in this tense attitude looked at me with that extraordinary stare of his, and exclaimed, 'Happy— I— happy? Good God, no!'

"'There is only one place. Mr. Rhodes,' I said, 'where we can find real happiness, and that is down at the feet of the crucified Saviour, because it is only there we can be freed from our sins.'

"'Yes,' he said, and then he added, 'I would give all I possess to believe what that old man in the next carriage believes.'"

Yes, old William Booth was "a stimulating thinker"—even more so than the Dean of St. Paul's.

. . . . . .

Now for the other kind. Here is a so-called "historical romance," entitled "The Giant"†—this same giant being Danton—Carlyle's, "gigantic mass of valour, ostentation, fury, affection and wild revolutionary force," whose meteoric career and bloody end afford the raw material of the story—not forgetting the inevitable erotic "love scene," without which your modern novel is incomplete. One wonders how many romances, readable and unreadable, have been written round the French Revolution and its more unpleasant characters since the "Tale of Two Cities" burst on a delighted world in 1859. Their name must be legion. As for this latest juggle with the old stock figures, after doggedly wading from one red cover to the other, the best one can say is, that if the after effects were neither sedative nor unduly irritating, they were at least—soporiferous.

. . . . . .

What shall we say of those mighty "stimuli," the great books that mean so much in the spiritual development of every child of Adam who uses such poor brains as God has given him for other purposes than calculating the odds, or juggling with market prices! Here is my experience for what it is worth. Of the dozen or so books that count, I cannot for the life of me recall the time when I read one of them right through. Take Gulliver, Tristram Shandy, Don Quixote, and the longer poems of Wordsworth, for example. Although it is no idle boast to say they are fairly familiar friends, it would bore me intensely to spend many consecutive hours in their company. Perhaps they are too "stimulating"—I vow Gulliver is—or is it with books as it is with beverages? Some can be swigged off like honest ale, others sniffed at and passed by as corked claret; but the greatest are noble vintages; to be tasted reverently, rolled round the palate and treated with ceremonial deference. One can laugh at and with Sancho Panza, but I always feel inclined to stand up when the Don enters—and, as it happens to be the bicentenary of the publishing of Gulliver, let all who revere that sardonic genius, Jonathan Swift, toast him in their next glass, thinking kindly of his failings—for he suffered much. Was *he* happy? Good God, no!

J. S. K.

* "Echoes and Memories." By Bramwell Booth. (Hodder and Stoughton. 7s. 6d. net.)

† "The Giant." By Bernard Hamilton. (Hutchinson and Co.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

MR. BELLOC IS LEFT OBJECTING.

Sir,—When it is pointed out that Darwin did not say what he is alleged to have said, Mr. Belloc calls this an enumeration of Darwin's inconsistencies. When it is pointed out that Mr. Belloc is attacking an entirely imaginary theory of natural selection, having no relation to Darwin's generalisations, Mr. Belloc tells us that this is an indication of *Darwin's* muddle-headedness!

It is quite obvious that after this Mr. Belloc will go on objecting to the end.

Wells said that Belloc could not produce modern authorities in support of the contentions that the theory of Natural Selection is "exploded," that Darwin and his collaborators hoped to get rid of the idea of, and the necessity for, a Creator, and so forth. So far as "Mr. Belloc Still Objects" is concerned, not a single quotation is given from any modern authority which supports these quaint contentions. Some quotations thirty years old are given, and another from Nageli, who was actually contemporary with Darwin. These are not modern authorities. In many cases quotations are given without any means of verification or of enabling the reader to turn up the context. Further quotations are given (still without means of verification) on the extraordinary assumption that because a man is a professor of anatomy or whatnot at a university (even at Harvard) he is therefore an authority on Darwin. Still more quotations are given which refute this, that, and the other which Darwin never taught, and himself in many cases repudiated, as I indicated in your issue of November 18. No doubt it was a dirty trick of Darwin's that he failed to support the nonsense often attributed to him, but I scarcely think that Mr. Belloc is justified in calling Darwin muddle-headed in consequence.

Professor Bateson is quoted: "We have come to the conviction that the principle of Natural Selection cannot have been the chief factor in determining species." How does this explode Darwin's theory that Natural Selection was one out of many of the means of modification? Darwin gave it as an opinion (not a dogma) that Natural Selection was the

chief of these means. Others have maintained that it is a secondary factor. It is in any case a matter of opinion which does not affect Darwin's theory.

Only lack of space prevents me from dealing with each quotation in turn. I hope your readers will get Mr. Belloc's little book and study it for themselves and compare it with the excellent and, in my opinion, quite unassailable case put forward by Mr. Wells. I am not concerned to defend Wells or attack Belloc, but I am concerned with what I conceive to be the truth in these matters. Perhaps I may best conclude with another quotation from Darwin himself ("Origin," sixth edition, p. 657): "My conclusions have lately been much misrepresented, and it has been stated that I attribute the modification of species exclusively to Natural Selection. . . . Great is the power of steady misrepresentation; but the history of science shows that fortunately the power does not long endure."

Darwin was perhaps a little optimistic in this regard, but though the misrepresentation still goes steadily on it as steadily loses effectiveness as time passes by.

HUGH P. VOWLES.

All communications should be addressed, Manager, THE NEW AGE, 70, *High Holborn, W.C.*1.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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The Social Credit Movement.

Supporters of the Social Credit Movement contend that under present conditions the purchasing power in the hands of the community is chronically insufficient to buy the whole product of industry. This is because the money required to finance capital production, and created by the banks for that purpose, is regarded as borrowed from them, and, therefore, in order that it may be repaid, is charged into the price of consumers' goods. It is a vital fallacy to treat new money thus created by the banks as a repayable loan, without crediting the community, on the strength of whose resources the money was created, with the value of the resulting new capital resources. This has given rise to a defective system of national loan accountancy, resulting in the reduction of the community to a condition of perpetual scarcity, and bringing them face to face with the alternatives of widespread unemployment of men and machines, as at present, or of international complications arising from the struggle for foreign markets.

The Douglas Social Credit Proposals would remedy this defect by increasing the purchasing power in the hands of the community to an amount sufficient to provide effective demand for the whole product of industry. This, of course, cannot be done by the orthodox method of creating new money, prevalent during the war, which necessarily gives rise to the "vicious spiral" of increased currency, higher prices, higher wages, higher costs, still higher prices, and so on. The essentials of the scheme are the simultaneous creation of new money and the regulation of the price of consumers' goods at their real cost of production (as distinct from their apparent financial cost under the present system). The technique for effecting this is fully described in Major Douglas's books.

The adoption of this scheme would result in an unprecedented improvement in the standard of living of the population by the absorption at home of the present unsaleable output, and would, therefore, eliminate the dangerous struggle for foreign markets. Unlike other suggested remedies, these proposals do not call for financial sacrifice on the part of any section of the community, while, on the other hand, they widen the scope for individual enterprise.

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NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Contributors are asked to take note that a column of large type in THE NEW AGE contains about 700 words, and a column of small type 975 words. Their contributions should therefore be of 700 or 1,400 words in the first case, or 975 or 1,950 words in the second. Articles slightly exceeding the one column, or the two columns, are liable to be cut. Except in special circumstances articles should not run on to three columns. Normally a writer should be able to explain his thesis adequately in one or in two columns. If not he should divide it with the above measurements in view.

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